

I am a private citizen who is afraid that without a strong net neutrality law or directive, services that I use today will become more expensive. Recently Time Warner communications has started to packet shape their network. This packet shaping is to “provide better service” to their customers by blocking activities that may be illegal or use too much bandwidth. I am in favor of removing the illegal activities from the net but not applications that use bandwidth.

I am concerned that with this packet shaping technology in place the users will be forced to pay extra to use services like Voice over IP and various video sites like YouTube. With the cable companies having their own VoIP services it will be very tempting for them to shape out traffic destined to other VoIP services like Vonage. Since I am a Vonage subscriber and not a Time Warner VoIP subscriber my phone service may be held hostage or I may be forced into the more expensive Time Warner service. Without a strong message from the government that, “attempts to propagate a monopolistic environment will not be tolerated”, I feel this is the direction we are headed. This will be bad for consumers.

The telecommunication companies are complaining of high bandwidth customers not paying for the data pipes they consume. What the telecommunication companies fail to recognize is that all users are paying for the pipes. Google pays for their entry to the network just like a broadband user pays for their end of the pipe. Baked into the cost of the connection is the cost of the intermediary connections to get from one side of the network to the other. The telecommunications companies should not be allowed to tax higher bandwidth services to “recover the costs of the intermediary transport” of the data. If they are not charging for those connections then they have the right to increase the cost if the market will bear them. Otherwise there should not be a defacto government sponsored tax on higher bandwidth applications and users.

Please take a look at this example as a vision of the future and enact strong policy towards network neutrality.